

Raid victims are asked to contact police

WINCHESTER police want to hear from any victims of recent shed or garage break-ins.

A search of two suspected burglars' homes have found some 30 items the police suspect have been stolen.

The men were arrested in Winnall Manor Road in the early hours of March 16.

Two 20-year-old men from Winchester have been arrested on suspicion of going equipped and are currently bailed until May 16.

Police have released images of sample of these, above, in the hope that members of the public may come forward to reclaim them.

Items recovered include power tools produced by various manufacturers and a variety of pedal cycles, again of several different brands. All this property amounts to a monetary value in excess of £5,000.

PC Emma Purser said: "The pictures we have released show just a small sample of the property we have recovered."

"All of it is the type of thing residents may have in their sheds, garages or other out-buildings, and we would encourage them to check their property to make sure that nothing has been taken."

Anyone who believes they may have had property taken and would like to reclaim it, or has any information about these kinds of burglaries in the Winchester area, should contact Winchester police station on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. Please quote Operation Dellow.

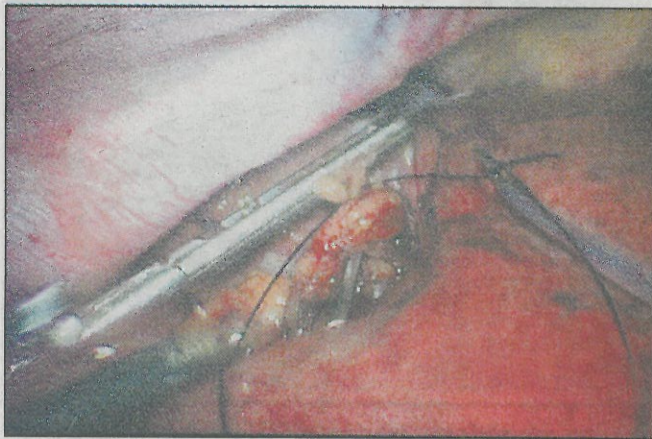
Sex charge man cleared

A WINCHESTER man has been cleared at court of a sex attack on a woman.

A jury at Winchester Crown Court acquitted Liam Foard, 23, of Portal Road, Highcliffe, after a four-day trial.

When it comes to keyhole liver surgery Southampton has become a record-breaking centre of excellence. MELANIE

UNLOCKING A NEW



Consultant surgeon Mr Mohammad Abu Hilal and his team, right, perform keyhole surgery and monitor progress on screen, above. Echo pictures by Chris Moorhouse.



GOING under the surgeon's knife can be a frightening prospect.

Fears of being cut open, having to stay in hospital for weeks to recover and being left with a huge scar that will be with you forever.

But patients at Southampton General Hospital could not be in safer hands thanks to a team of doctors and nurses who are leading the way with state-of-the-art techniques that can reduce the number of patients forced to face major open surgery, see patients up and about within days and leaving them with one small incision that barely leaves a mark.

Led by consultant surgeon Mohammed Abu Hilal, the city's hospital has become a world-renowned beacon for keyhole liver surgery, performing 200 operations – the largest series in the country.

Over the last five years Mr Abu Hilal and his dedicated team, including his colleague Neil Pearce, have been building up their skills and expertise in this field, having recognised the immense benefits for patients.

Their reputation is such that the hospital is viewed as a centre of excellence in the field, with consultants from across the globe coming to the city to be taught the procedure and learn from the masters of this minimally invasive operation.

So when I was invited into

theatre to see the experts in action, I knew I was about to witness something very special.

Having grown up watching *Casualty* and *Holby City*, I stepped into theatre expecting frantic scenes of people rushing around and machines beeping constantly as they battled to get the job done.

I couldn't have been more wrong.

As I walked in wearing my scrubs, partway through a laparoscopic liver operation, I was met with a comforting sense of calm.

With the lights dimmed, Mr Abu Hilal and his team were operating on a female patient, trying to remove the tumours in her liver, without having to open her up, which has traditionally been the standard procedure.

There was not an open wound in sight, just three small areas where incisions were made, each no more than 7mm wide, to allow the laparoscope to be placed inside the abdomen, where the surgery is done.

Unable to use their hands, into the holes go cameras, forceps, electrical dissectors and

staplers, to get the job done.

All eyes were focused on two TV screens, providing magnification of the affected areas, showing the surgeons what they are doing.

It is hard to make out on the screens what I was looking at, as flashes of reds and pinks are picked up on the camera, but Mr Abu Hilal explains they need to prepare the liver before they remove the lighter areas, which are the tumours.

It is clearly a team effort, with scrub nurses quick to respond to Mr Abu Hilal's commands for scissors or swabs.

As one of the machines begins to beep, there is a sudden sense of urgency among the team, but Mr Abu Hilal remains unfazed, focused on the intricate cuts he is making through the flesh.

His quick and precise actions restore the calm, and within a few hours the tumours had been removed and the team were congratulating themselves on another job well done.

Speaking to me after sur-

gery, Mr Hilal said: "This type of surgery is very skilled and very complex. You have to be precise because there is no room for mistakes."

"But because of the high number of cases we have had in Southampton we have been able to develop our skills and sophisticated techniques for keyhole surgery."

"There are numerous benefits to the patients, the main one being that this surgery means we do not have to open up the patient and make large cuts."

"This means it is less painful, the muscles around the stomach are stronger and the risk of infection is dramatically reduced."

"This all helps to speed up recovery times and patients are able to go home the same day and start returning to their normal lives much quicker than ever before."

So far Mr Abu Hilal and his team have trained more than 50 consultants, completed nine teaching courses and jetted to other countries to help set up the procedure there.

He hopes their work in

laparoscopic surgery, of which they use for the pancreases and bile ducts, as well as the liver, will lead the way for fewer patients needing to be cut open.

He added: "Thanks to my team we have been able to establish Southampton as a centre of excellence for laparoscopic liver and pancreas surgery – giving patients in our area the best possible treatment."

"We have become so established that we have started running a course to teach consultations from across the UK and Europe. They come over to see how we work and then we visit them in theatre to act as their mentors."

"I am very proud that I have worked with Neil Pearce and developed Southampton as one of the leading centres."

"The main responsibility that I have isn't to keep this in Southampton because I want everyone in the country and hopefully the world to benefit from this wonderful possibility."

"When we are spending taxpayers' money we need to make sure we are using the most efficient and effective treatments and keyhole surgery does that."

"But to continue our good work we need more funding to allow us to carry out further research and to pay for more specialised equipment and to train more people."

To help develop their work further Mr Abu Hilal has set up the Hepato pancreatic and biliary diseases (HPB) education fund. Money raised through this fund will improve research into HPB disease, develop equipment for laparoscopic surgical procedures and help run educational events for nurses and doctors about HPB. To make a donation or to organise a charity event call clinical nurse Joanna Dowie on 023 8079 6977.

Man, 25, due in court

AN Eastleigh man is due before magistrates today accused of stealing post.

William John Allen, 25, of Brightwire Crescent, Eastleigh, is charged with stealing £14.39 from a letter between August 19-30, 2008.

Allen is also alleged to have stolen 365 packages between November 24-29, 2010.

The thefts are said to have happened in Alresford. He is due before Basingstoke Magistrates Court.

Abbey open meeting

THE Friends of Romsey Abbey are holding an open meeting tomorrow at 7.30pm in the Abbey, when the speaker will be Frank Green.

He will be talking about four decades of archaeological investigation and discovery, from two metres below ground to the top of the belfry, and from the 7th to the 21st centuries.

The price of £6, payable at the door, will include a glass of wine.

Grant for specialist nurse

A SPECIALIST stroke nurse in Southampton has been awarded a prestigious grant to get top treatment tips from hospitals across Europe.

Georgina Banks, who is based at Southampton General Hospital, will receive £3,500 as part of the Florence Nightingale Foundation Travel Scholarship programme.

The project is designed to support senior nurses and midwives at the top levels of the health system.

The award will allow Georgina to visit some of Europe's top stroke units and help Southampton reach their goal of achieving a combined acute and rehabilitation stroke unit in the city.

SAINTS v MK DONS AT ST MARY'S - see sport starting on page 31